



Western Victoria has had a great start to the season as good fallow rainfall provided great sowing conditions followed up by an inch of rain received post sowing. All canola is in the ground and a large majority of the wheat and barley acreage has also been sown. The crops that are yet to be sown will still have a great chance of success as the recent rainfall has replenished the soil and provided a full moisture profile. Most of the canola and early sown wheat and barley crops have now emerged and are looking very healthy.

Despite the positive start to the season it seems that if it is not drought affecting the crop it is something else. Locusts and mice have caused growers a lot of problems this season. The mice are eating sown seed before shooting causing slow emergence and in extreme cases requiring growers to re-sow poorly emerging crops. The locust numbers have decreased significantly since the colder weather has started, however without leaving widespread damage on some crops, in some cases eating whole canola crops. Growers are still very concerned about the eggs that have been laid as it is believed that they will hatch when the weather gets warmer in the spring. Mice baiting has been increased in the past week as growers are concerned that the hungry mice will start to eat young plants as food becomes scarce.

Looking at markets canola has been the real mover in the past few weeks. This is due to the falling value of the Australian dollar and also unfavorable weather conditions in Canada. The unfavorable wet weather is closing the planting window, and could see some acres set aside from canola planting and will see other commodities planted. Wheat has also moved in a positive way in the past few weeks as the dollar has fallen, however it seems that growers are happy to wait and see what the next few weeks bring before parting with their grain. Feed barley has finally seen a rise in the past few weeks as feed lot demand and the lower dollar have helped growers move grain out of silos and sausage bags. Growers who were happy to hold onto stock into the next season are seeing these prices as a great way to get some cash flow.

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